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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OTRA](#) [TPHY](#) [ASEC](#) [ES](#)
SUBJECT: COUNTRY CLEARANCE FOR JAMES STEFANOV

REF: STATE 146720

¶1. Post grants country clearance for supervisory physical scientist James Stefanov to visit San Salvador from November 19, 2006 through November 22, 2006 to represent the United States at the Fourth Coordination Workshop of the UNESCO/OAS ISARM Americas Program (Transboundary Aquifers of the Americas). Mr. Stefanov will arrive on Continental Airlines flight 828 at 8:53pm on 11/19 and depart on Continental Airlines flight 827 at 1:20pm on 11/22. Control Officer for this visit is Geoffrey Schadrack, Embassy phone number (503) 2278-4444, ext. 2052.

¶2. Clearances: Post has no knowledge of any security clearance held by Mr. Stefanov.

Absent this clearance information, security regulations may limit visitor access to US Government facilities, may require that visitors be escorted while in US Government facilities where classified information is stored, produced, or discussed, and may prohibit visitor access to classified information or classified information handling equipment while in El Salvador. Visitors may use their diplomatic or official passport or State Department building pass to obtain a temporary Embassy-issued identification card, required to access and be on the Embassy compound.

All TDY visitors under COM authority who will be in-country more than ten working days are required to receive a security briefing by the Regional Security Office. Your sponsor will provide you with the date and time of your briefing.

¶3. Accommodations. Post understands that hotel reservations have already been made at the Holiday Inn hotel, Tel. 22414000.

¶4. Administrative Support Services (ICASS) for TDY/Visitors: Action Request:

(a) If administrative support services are necessary, regardless of length of stay, then the visitor must be able to present to the Financial Management Office their travel authorization (or another fund cite) in order to pay for direct costs of the visit. Each agency, organization, or visiting delegation will be charged for the actual costs attributed to their visit and will be advised of this action. Direct charge costs include, but are not limited to: American and LES staff overtime (e.g., expediting, accommodation exchange, and representational event support), field travel-lodging and M&IE by Embassy employees, vehicle rentals, long distance telephone calls, equipment rentals, office supplies and all other costs that are directly attributable to the visit.

(b) Also, for TDYers over thirty (30) days, there is a charge for ICASS support services. If your sponsoring agency is not signed up for ICASS services at Post, please be prepared to sign a MOU for ICASS support services upon arrival. The agency should provide post with a written communication generated by the traveler's headquarters that confirms the agency will pay ICASS charges for the TDYers, provide the agency ICASS billing code the TDY support charges should be applied to, and authorizes the traveler to sign the ICASS invoice generated by the TDY module. Where travel is

urgent, the TDYers should bring this documentation with them to ensure there are no interruptions in the provision of service. Post will not provide any service to a TDYer staying in excess of thirty days without provision of this documentation before day 31 of the TDY.

15. Airport transportation services. Most hotels offer airport shuttle service for their confirmed guests. This service may be free, but is typically charged at rates ranging between \$7.00 and \$15.00 per one-way trip. The hotels that currently offer this service are: Radisson, Princess Hotel, Holiday Inn Hotel, Sheraton Presidente San Salvador Hotel and Real Intercontinental. If airport shuttle service by the hotel is not acceptable, your embassy POC can request State Motor Pool transportation services. If the TDY traveler(s) agency is not represented at post, the host agency will be charged for ICASS mileage.

(a) Taxis. GSO and the Princess Hotel recommend ACACYA taxis. This company provides 24/7 services throughout San Salvador. They provide a/c sedans and/or vans upon request. This company operates a Kiosk at the airport (located at the meet/greet lobby of the terminal, outside of the passenger's exit), tel. numbers (503) 2339-9282 or (503) 2339-9271 and from Hotel Princess (503) 2298-4545 (EXT. 2540). The company will accept reservations via their e-mail address - acacya_es@yahoo.es. The following charges are levied from the following areas: Urban areas within San Salvador to the International Airport \$25.00. Embassy area (Santa Elena)/ International Airport \$22.00

(b) Transporte Express. This company provides services throughout San Salvador. They provide minivans or 15 person vans upon request. Telephone numbers are (503) 2252-9400 or (503) 2252-9401. The company offers transfers to the airport for \$30.00 each way for minivans and \$35.00 for the larger vans. They will also "meet and greet" at the airport upon arrival. Additionally, they offer hourly rates (3 hour minimum) for shopping or sightseeing excursions. Their web site is: www.transporte-express.com

16. Laptop Policy. TDY employees requiring connectivity for their properly configured State Department equipment should include the request in their Country Clearance Request cable. The traveler will be instructed to hand carry the equipment; never allow it to leave his or her possession, and to bring it directly to the Embassy upon arrival in the country. Alternatively, the equipment may be sent via secure Classified Pouch prior to the visit. No device is permitted to be connected to a State Department computer or network without the prior approval from the Information Management Officer (IMO). Approval will be based on the type of device and associated security risks, and whether the equipment and configuration have been approved by the State Department Information Technology Change Control Board (ITCCB), including up-to-date virus protection for PCs. Laptops will not be allowed onto the compound without prior written permission from the RSO office.

17. Country Clearance/Visa Issues/Firearms: Country clearance is required for all personnel entering El Salvador. Individuals entering El Salvador on U.S. Diplomatic, Official or Tourist passports are not/not required to obtain a Salvadoran Visa prior to entering the country. However, holders of Tourist passports should expect to pay a \$10.00 fee at the port of entry. Individuals possessing a passport from a country other than the United States should consult the Salvadoran Embassy in Washington D.C. for that country's visa requirements. A departure fee of USD 34.00 is charged commercial airline customers, and is included in your ticket price. Bearers of diplomatic passports are exempt from this departure fee. The importation or possession of any firearm or ammunition while traveling to or while in El Salvador is prohibited. Travelers in possession of any firearm or ammunition are subject to arrest/detainment by Salvadoran authorities. Any exception to this rule MUST be approved in advance of arrival by the RSO of the U.S. Embassy and Salvadoran authorities. Approval to carry a firearm on a flight from airlines departing the U.S. to El Salvador does not constitute approval from the Government of El Salvador to bear a firearm while in El Salvador.

18. Security information: the threat against Americans from political activity is considered low. The threat from criminal elements is critical. Random, violent crime is endemic throughout the country.

Armed street robberies, carjacking, kidnapping for ransom, sexual assaults and residential burglaries threaten every person in the country. US Citizen or official travelers have not been singled out, but are subject to the same threat as all other persons in El Salvador. If travelers are not being met by Embassy personnel or taking the airport shuttle, then they should schedule their flights to arrive during daylight hours in order to get into San Salvador before nightfall. Traveling on the roads after dusk is dangerous for security and traffic safety reasons.

¶9. Precautions: though all areas of the country are on limits, travelers need to be aware that the downtown area of San Salvador, along with other urban areas in the country, is significantly less safe than the west side of the capital. Visitors are strongly advised to exercise caution while in the vicinity of your hotel, particularly at night. Travel to rural areas should be undertaken with caution and scheduled so as to arrive in San Salvador or another major city by dark. Mountain roads and poorly maintained vehicles are a danger to travelers. Highway robberies and other violence are real threats. Public transportation, especially buses, both within and outside the capital is risky and is not recommended. Use radio dispatched taxis or those stationed in front of your hotel.

¶10. Contact with local media: the Ambassador has charged the Office of Public Affairs with reviewing and managing public diplomacy activities on behalf of the entire Embassy. All official visitors must coordinate participation in any public event with the Public Affairs Officer or Information Officer in advance. This requirement applies to interviews with radio, television and print media as well as to public speeches.

¶11. Health issues:

--Food: Visitors to El Salvador are at risk for gastrointestinal illnesses. Pay careful attention to the choice of food and beverages. Most well known restaurants are considered safe.

--Drink: Bottled drinks are considered safe. Tap water is not considered potable.

--Infectious diseases: All persons traveling in El Salvador, even for a brief visit, are at risk of contracting dengue. Reduce contact with mosquitoes to reduce risk of dengue.

--Immunizations: No additional immunizations are required.

Immunizations for hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and typhoid reduce the risk of contracting these diseases. Short-term visitors who adhere to good hygiene measures and follow recommendations concerning food and water consumption have a minimal chance of exposure. Tetanus immunization should be updated. Because rabies is endemic in El Salvador, visitors should avoid contact with animals whose immunization status is unknown.

--Automobile safety: Automobile accidents are among the most common causes of serious injury. Avoid driving at night. Use seat belts.

--Emergency medical services: Emergency medical care is limited in El Salvador. The health unit keeps an up-to-date list of available health facilities in San Salvador. Travelers should arrange for medical evacuation insurance either personally or through their sponsoring agency prior to their arrival.

¶12. All U.S. Government funded travelers are reminded to utilize U.S. airlines whenever possible.

¶13. If any questions or concerns regarding security matters, please contact the U.S. Embassy telephone number (503) 2278-4444, RSO: ext. 2262.

Barclay